

## Comparative and semasiological study of denotative water class units in English and French

Estudio comparativo y semasiológico de unidades de clase de agua denotativa en inglés y francés

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### ABSTRACT

The surrounding world can be described by a person on several levels, including the language level. In linguistics, this global problem has been systematically studied only in fragments. Thus, it was suggested that there is an internal logic of language, which determines the choice of certain ways of verbalization of objective reality, and also separate studies were conducted showing that in the meaning of lexical units, the nature of the subject's entry into the world is embodied in a certain set of features. Comparative and semasiological studies of various aspects of this problem are rare. Meanwhile, they would: a) detect which parts of the sensible world can be expressed in a certain language, and by means of what linguistic resources; b) dissect the selectivity of languages for the broadcast of certain physical parameters and their emotional and evaluative nuance; c) identify a set of properties of those segments of reality which demonstrate a predominant perceptual interest for bearer of mapped cultures.

**Keywords:** denotative class, word meaning, convergence, divergence, comparative and semasiological approach.

### RESUMEN

El mundo que lo rodea puede ser descrito por una persona en varios niveles, incluido el nivel del idioma. En lingüística, este problema global se ha estudiado sistemáticamente solo en fragmentos. Por lo tanto, se sugirió que existe una lógica interna del lenguaje, que determina la elección de ciertas formas de verbalización de la realidad objetiva, y también se realizaron estudios separados que muestran que, en el significado de las unidades léxicas, la naturaleza de la entrada del sujeto en El mundo está encarnado en un cierto conjunto de características. Los estudios comparativos y semasiológicos de varios aspectos de este problema son poco frecuentes. Mientras tanto, ellos: a) detectarían qué partes del mundo sensible se pueden expresar en un idioma determinado, y por medio de qué recursos lingüísticos; b) diseccionar la selectividad de los idiomas para la transmisión de ciertos parámetros físicos y sus matices emocionales y evaluativos; c) identificar un conjunto de propiedades de esos segmentos de la realidad que demuestran un interés perceptual predominante para el portador de cultivos mapeados.

**Palabras clave:** clase denotativa, significado de las palabras, convergencia, divergencia, enfoque comparativo y semasiológico.

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## INTRODUCTION

In philosophical and psychological literature human perception of the world is interpreted as a dynamic activity of the subject to reflect the objective reality (Petrovsky & Yaroshevsky, 1990). A person can know the world around him only by isolating himself from this world first, relying on the opposition of the Self to all that is not the Self and this must be based on the recognition of the existence both himself and the world from which he distinguishes himself and of which he is a part (Voronin, 1986; Gurevich, 1998).

The surrounding world can be described by a person on several levels, including the language level (Ruzin, 1994). To describe the world on the language level you need to determine what from the perceived world can be expressed in language; what laws this expression obeys; with what aspects of reality the bearer of a language identifies himself; with what substantive content his idea of Self filled; what space is considered by a person as an external expression of his own Self; what zones are allocated as extrapolated to the subject (Berestnev, 2001).

The essence of sensory reflection of objective reality in language, the mechanisms of transformation of perceptual categories in the language structure, patterns of use of linguistic material, depending on the nature of the information received, especially the reflection of the perceptual-cognitive images in the lexical-semantic system of language was not subjected to systematic study. Nevertheless, there are fruitful attempts to solve some particular issues of the global problem of language mediation of human perception of the world both on the material of one language (Voronin, 1986; Gurevich, 1998; Lechitskaya, 1985). and on the material of several languages (Toporova, 2000; Berlin & Kay, 1969).

In our opinion, special attention in this context deserves the approach of T.V. Simashko, who showed that in the meaning of lexical units of the national Russian language, the character of the subject's entry into the world is embodied in a certain set of features. Among these features there are the following ones: a) features as a result of observations of the subject over the physical properties of the object; b) features that reveal established by the subject the relationship between individual features or the individual circumstances of the existence and functioning of natural phenomena; c) features, recorded as the result of the effects experienced by the subject on himself from the object; d) evaluation of the properties of the object and the manifestation of emotion to it by the subject (Simashko, 1998). The results obtained by the researcher confirm the hypothesis, expressed, in particular, by G.I. Ruzin, about the presence of internal logic of language, which determines the choice of certain ways of verbalization of objective reality (Ruzin, 1994). As far as we know, there are no comparative and semasiological works performed in the same way, but our observations show in favor of the proposed assumption.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research file includes about 10,000 lexical units extracted from 10 lexicographic sources and more than 2,000 English and French fictional microcontexts, i.e. 1-2 sentences extracted from the works of English and French writers with a total volume of 7,102 pages. The work also used a variety of cultural, ethnographic, psychological, philosophical and other data.

The specific semantic space is determined by the deductive method used in the ideographic classification of vocabulary. The selection of vocabulary units was carried out inductively. The selection of a set of features in a certain set of denotatively related units of one language, by means of which some units differ from each other, and others are combined into different groupings, was made by means of a definitional analysis. When interpreting semantic similarities and / or differences between the studied languages, the guide to action was a comparative method, the components of which are the choice of the basis of comparison, comparative interpretation, consisting in the disclosure of the content of the obtained results, and typological characteristics. Comparison of different structural units was carried out by a single method. Words in a different language with a direct nominative value were recognized equivalent if the features fixed in value and /or internal form of one of the studied language units correlate with the features transmitted by value and / or inner form of another studied language units.

We proceed from the assumption that the perception of reality by the collective subject is not its mirror image; it is refracted through certain structures of knowledge. The perception and awareness of the collective subject of the world is derived from the cultural and historical existence of the ethnos. In linguistics, the thesis of different interpretations of objects of reality in the linguistic consciousness of representatives of different linguistic cultures, as it seems, is not disputed by anyone. "The ideal form of existence of the object world, its properties, connections and relations mediated and coiled in the matter of language" (Leont'ev, 1965). is fixed in the meaning of words. Human perception and awareness of the world are armed and at the same time limited by the specifically historical system of meanings, which carries the total social experience and which is inherent in a particular culture (Petrenko, 1997).

Similarities and differences in the systems of lexical meanings are due to the peculiarities of national life and mentality, the originality of the natural environment and, as a consequence, a certain choice of a particular language points of reference by native speakers, or the most typical prototypes of a concept. We believe that a comparative approach to the problem under discussion allows: a) discovering which fragments of the sensually perceived world can be expressed in a particular language and with the help of which language resources; b) revealing the selectivity of languages in the translation of certain physical parameters and their emotional and evaluative nuance; c) identifying a set of properties of those segments of reality to which the carriers of comparable linguocultures show a predominant perceptual interest.

Let us consider from this point of view such a parameter as 'features presented as a result of observations of the collective subject over the physical properties of natural phenomena'.

To physical parameters of the objects perceived by the person and having for them paramount importance, they attribute color, in mentality of the ordinary native speaker there is a naive picture of color (Postovalova, 1988). Color attracts the attention of researchers in many fields of science, as color perception and light perception cover all major areas of human

activity (Goldstein, 1984; Hurvich, 1981). In traditional comparative linguistics, color meanings are studied on the basis of lexical and phraseological units mainly from the point of view of establishing semantic-stylistic and word-forming characteristics of color meanings of different languages (Sveshnikova, 1969; Fedorova, 1981; Yurik, 1958).

With the formation of cognitive science, the interest of linguists to this issue only increases (Gadanyi et al, 2000; Rosch, 1975; Wierzbicka, 1992). The leitmotif of all the works is the statement that the coloristic language reflects the color traditions of a culture formed in different historical and geographical conditions. From the point of view of modern man, color is an unstable sign of an object for perception. It changes in time and space depending on the light and in the dark it is invisible. Color is perceived only by the visual analyzer (Lazareva, 2000). But in primitive man, as, indeed, in modern man, it was visual impressions that prevailed (Makovsky, 1980). Colors have a wide and complex range of symbolic meanings, but often these meanings are based on arbitrary color choices. Taken as a whole, the colors are mostly life-affirming symbols (Tresidder, 2001).

The examination of the denotatively related color meanings of the English and French languages at our disposal allowed establishing both the facts of similarity and the manifestation of differences in the peculiarities of fixation in the lexical meaning of the units of characteristics presented as a result of observations of the collective subject over the coloristic properties of natural objects. (Esfahani, & et al, 2018).

The manifestation of the symmetry of the semantic space of the English and French languages is the fact that the parameter 'color' is fixed in the lexical meaning of the units of many denotative classes of the studied languages. Thus, in the denotative WATER class of English and French, color characteristics are fixed either in the internal form or in the meaning of the names of aquatic flora and fauna. Both matched languages include yellow, white, black, and red. For example: blackfish – 'tautog', anemone – 'any of a number of related plants with cup-shaped flowers, usually of white, purple, or red; a sea anemone' (Webster's new world dictionary, 1964), némale – Bot. Genre d'algues rouges gélatineuses, qui croissent dans les eaux à cours rapide', nélombo – 'plante aquatique à fleurs blanches et jaunes' (Robert, 1978).

In English, in addition, the color characteristics of aquatic inhabitants cover yellow-red-brown shades. For example: cardinal flower – 'the bright-red flower of a North American plant that grows in damp, shady places or in shallow water', laver – 'any of various large, edible, purple seaweeds' (Webster's new world dictionary, 1964); sea bass – 'a dark-brown or black marine food fish with large scales and a wide mouth, found along the Atlantic coast' (Robert, 1978).

Unlike English, in French, the color characteristics of sea creatures are concentrated around pastel tones. For example: eupatoire – plante, herbacée, vivace, à hautes tiges, à fleurs roses, qui croit au bord des eaux et que l'on nomme chanvre d'eau', martin-pêc heur – 'petite oiseau passereau, au corps épais, à long bec, à plumage bleu et roux, qui se nourrit de poissons' (Robert, 1978).

Only in the English language in the names of water sources, as well as in the vocabulary associated with the description of the Navy, their color characteristics are fixed. It is limited to the shades of the adjective *blue*. For example: the blue – 'the sea', blue – 'of the colour blue; having the colour of the clear sky or the deep sea', navy – 'navy blue', navy blue – '[from the colour of the British naval uniform] very dark blue' (Webster's new world dictionary, 1964).

Let us note that other results obtained by observing the color characteristics conferred on water sources in English and French fictional contexts. In both languages, shades of blue and green are most commonly used to describe the sea, but are very specific to each language. For example: The sea was a multitude of shades of aquamarine and lapis lazuli ... (Berniere, 1994). The sea ripples, clear and transparent white on the pale sand, soon deepened to peacock green and blues away from shore (Aldington, 1967); Je voyais la mer vert foncé et huileuse au loin derrière les pins parasol et les chênes. Le ciel, la mer étaient d'un bleu admirable, laiteux – bleu comme le bleu des porcelains de Meissen (Quignard, 1986).

In English contexts, the coloristic image of the sea is also conveyed by the adjective *grey* or its shades. For example: ... she lay and looked past chimney pots to the grey sea (Bragg, 1981), Those eyes were of the changing foam-streaked grey-green of leaping Northern seas (Wright, 1979) ... lastly, in his waking dream it seemed to him that Adventurer had risen to his feet, but was still speaking, still holding him with his sea-grey eyes (Grahame, 1980).

At the same time, the English authors often do not specify the color of the sea, preferring to emphasize only the intensity of color. For example: In the end, the soul is alone, brooding on the face of the uncreated flux, as a bird on a dark sea...; As he swam gently along and looked down through the mirror-clear water he saw... (Aldington, 1967).

Semantic parallelism of the English and French languages can be traced in the fact that in literary texts the rivers, lakes, bays and canals are received color characteristics not only the seas. Observations show that in English, when describing rivers and lakes, color intensifiers are more often used instead of color designations, whereas in French, colors of the rainbow spectrum are used. For example: The river had the bright hues of the early morning (Skobeleva, 1988; Grahame, 1980); At dusk, the mountains of Transylvania were silhouettes, backlit by the setting sun, and where the land fell away from the river he could see lakes that turned violet as night came on (Furst, 1993); ... et que le soleil du printemps teignait déjà les flots du Grand Canal d'un si somber azur et de si nombres émeraudes qu'en venant se briser aux pieds des peintures du Titien, ils pouvaient rivaliser de riche coloris avec eux (Quignard, 1986); Alors il n'a plus qu'à regarder, d'en haut, la rivière qui devient toute bleue ... , Yvars continuait d'aimer la mer, mais seulement à la fin du jour quand les eaux de la baie fondaient un peu (Conteurs français du XX-e siècle, 1981).

Only in English contexts the colour of rivers and lakes is often compared to the sheen of silver or likened to reflected sunlight or moonlight. For example: ... the river ran silver in the grayish light ... (Furst, 1993); Sunshine poured over the unfolding land, reflecting brilliantly from ... rivers (Wright, 1979). The navigator followed roads, or moonlight reflected from rivers or lakes (Eco, 1984).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis showed that the common for the semantic system of the English and French languages is the reflection of such a physical property of the natural object of WATER as color. Color characteristics of objects, such as 'yellow', 'white', 'black', 'red' are fixed in the internal form and / or in the meaning of units of the same denotative class of both languages under consideration. At the same time, shades of blue and green are fixed in fictional contexts, but not the same in English and French. Only in English the yellow-red-brown color scheme is fixed. Often in English contexts, the color of the sea is transmitted by means of the adjective *grey* or its shades, or the color of the sea is not called; only its intensity is emphasized. Only in French contexts pastel colors of water sources are emphasized. In the fictional contexts of English and French, not only the seas, but also rivers, lakes, bays and canals have color characteristics. Only in French, when describing rivers and lakes, colors of the rainbow spectrum are often used. It is only in English that the colour of rivers and lakes is compared to the silver glitter, or likened to reflected sunlight or moonlight.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this article, on the material of denotatively related vocabulary a lot of semantic features peculiar to the units of the denotative WATER class of the English and French languages are revealed. To a superficial glance, it may seem that the established linguistic facts are scattered, duplicate each other or are not equal in depth and volume of penetration. However, systematized on the basis of the triad "universal – typical – ethnospecific", these apparently disconnected semantic phenomena appear voluminous, interrelated and explicable. It becomes obvious that the fragments of language space, structured by units of denotative WATER class, are not mirrored in the compared English and French languages.

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